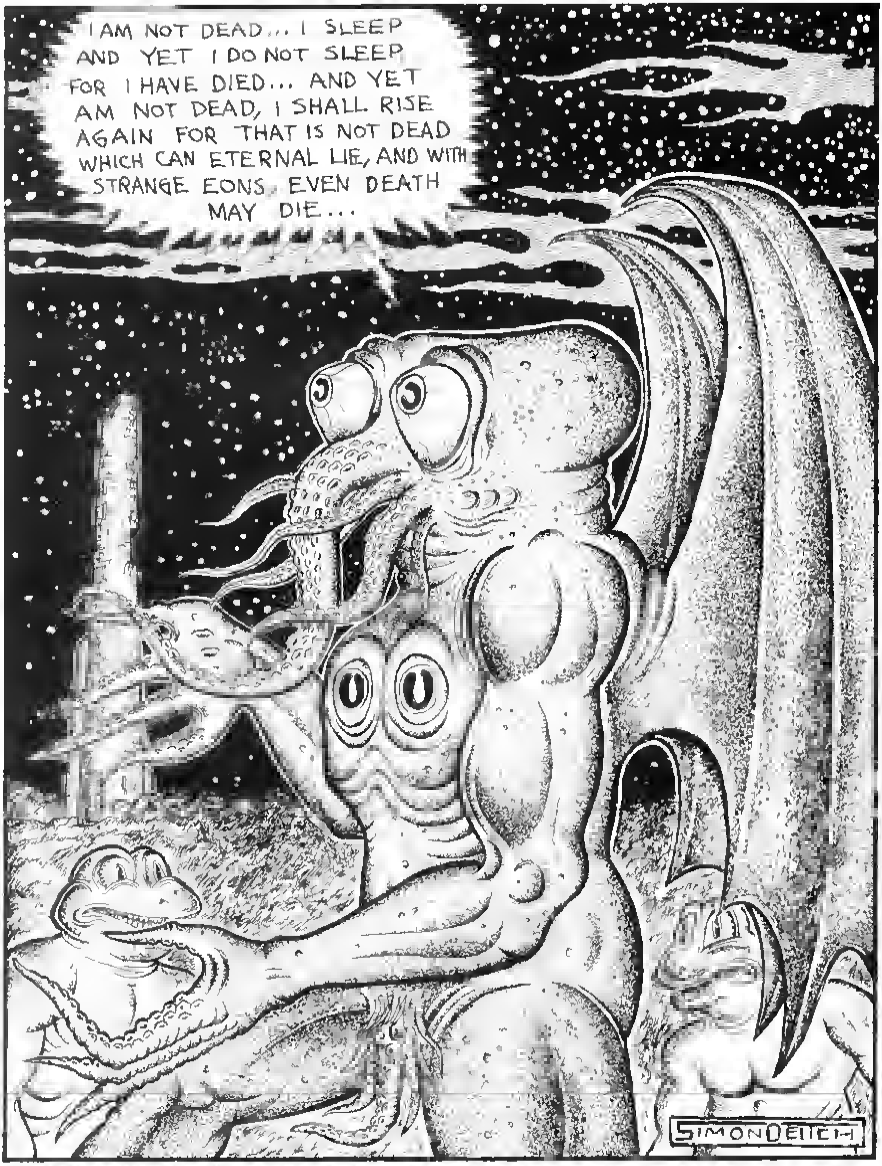
NO. 4 · SPECIAL ISSUE: LOVECRAFT



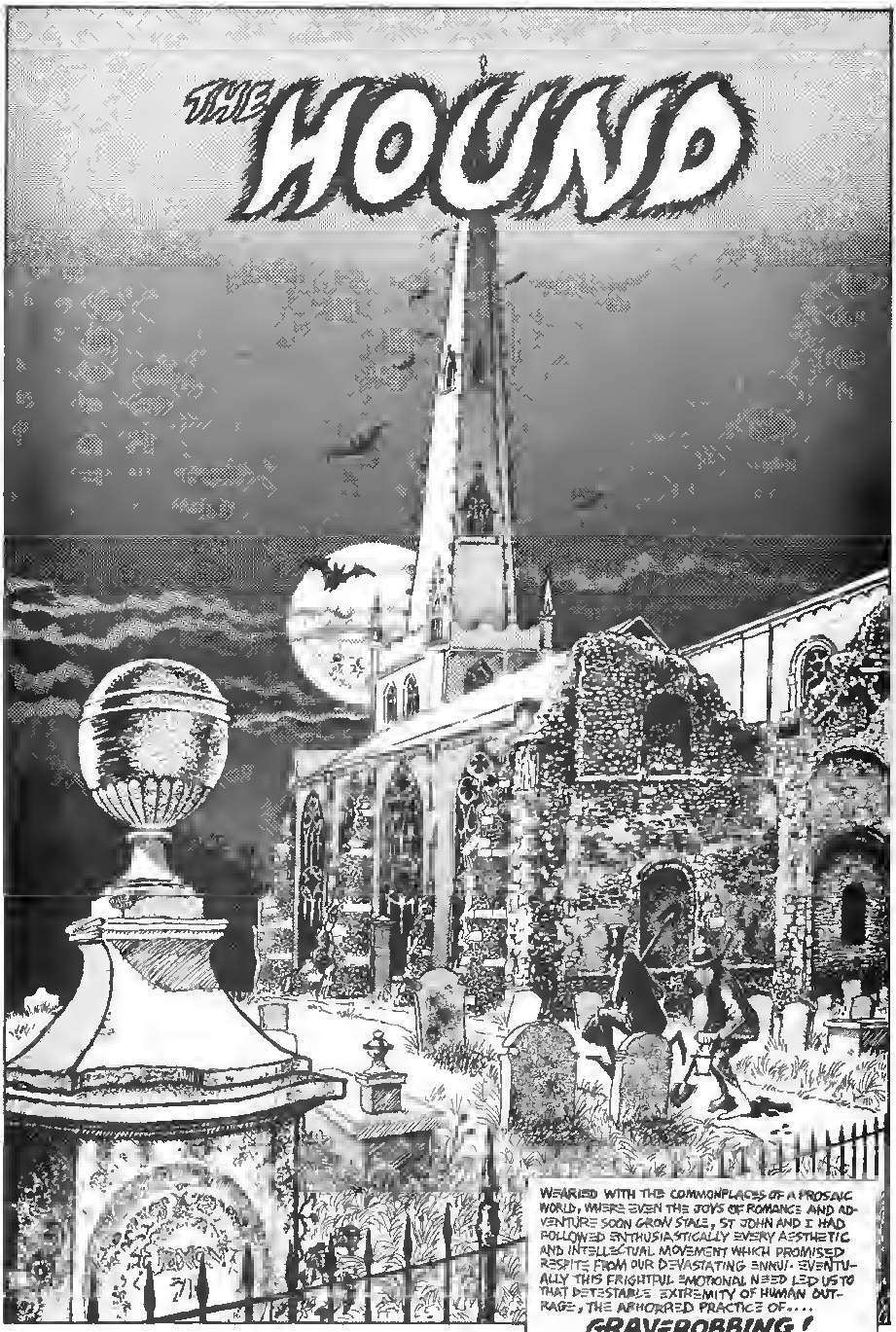

SKULL COMICS No.4 - © 1972 by Arnold, Smith, Deitch, Dallas, Todd, Sheridan, Jaxon and Last Gasp Eco-Funnies. Cosmic Supervisor- Gary Arlington. Published by Last-Gasp, Box 212, Berkeley, Calif. 94701. This book is dedicated to the late August Derleth, for his lifelong interest in the medium of the comic strip and his encouragement to us in this special project, a tribute to Arkham House and the master of the macabre, H.P. Lovecraft.

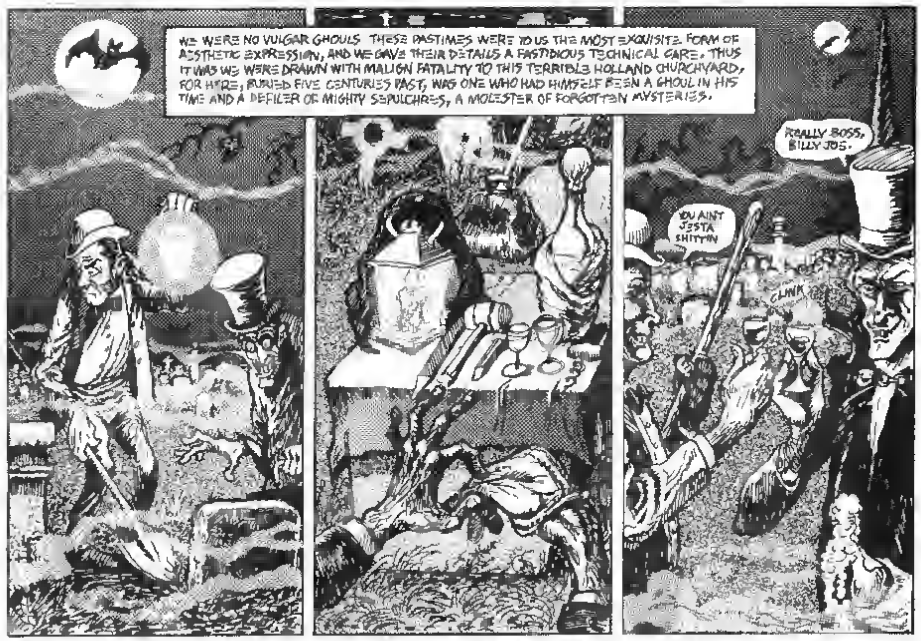
# SKULL

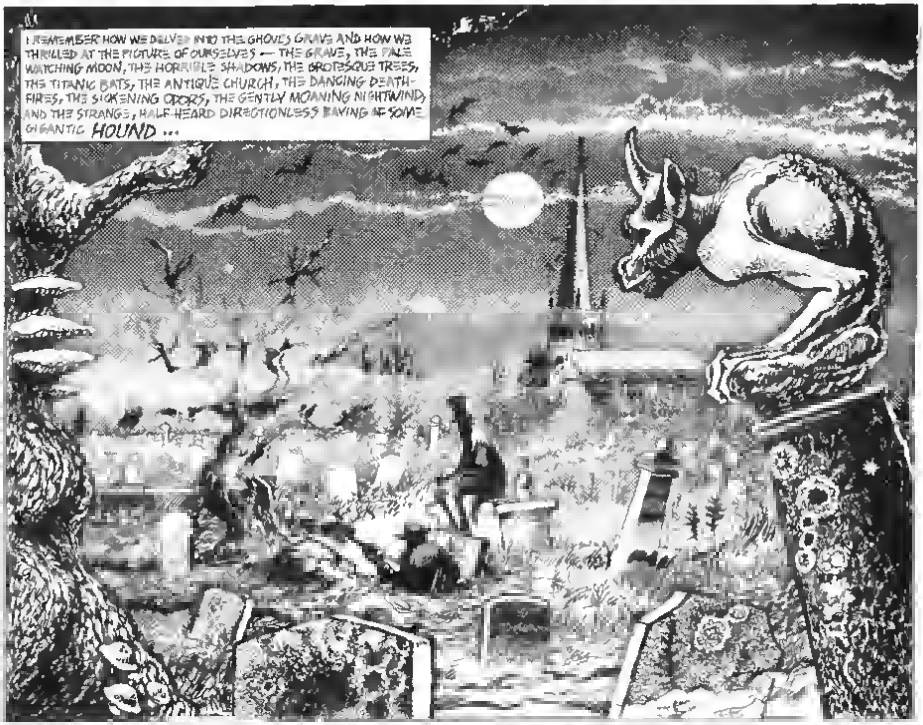
WELCOME, FEAR FREAKS, TO THE SKULL'S MOULDY ARCHIVES. DOWN HERE AMONG THE COBWEBS AND BATSHIT IS WHERE YOU'LL FIND ALL THE MIND SQUISHING TALES OF MALIGNANT EVIL... JUST LIKE OUR TWO FRIENDS HERE!

## ·NUMBER FOUR·

SGT MARK E. RAINEY


THE HOUND
WEARIED WITH THE COMMONPLACES OF A PROSAIC WORLD, WHERE EVEN THE JOYS OF ROMANCE AND ADVENTURE SOON GROW STALE, ST JOHN AND I HAD FOLLOWED ENTHUSIASTICALLY EVERY AESTHETIC AND INTELLECTUAL MOVEMENT WHICH PROMISED RESPITE FROM OUR DEVASTATING ENNUI. EVENTUALLY THIS FRIGHTFUL EMOTIONAL NEED LED US TO THAT DETESTABLE EXTREMITY OF HUMAN OUTRAGE, THE ABHORRED PRACTICE OF....
GRAVEROBBING!


WE WERE NO VULGAR GHOULS. THESE PASTIMES WERE TO US THE MOST EXQUISITE FORM OF AESTHETIC EXPRESSION, AND WE GAVE THEIR DETAILS A FASTIDIOUS TECHNICAL CARE. THUS IT WAS WE WERE DRAWN WITH MALIGN FATALITY TO THIS TERRIBLE HOLLAND CHURCHYARD, FOR HERE, BURIED FIVE CENTURIES PAST, WAS ONE WHO HAD HIMSELF BEEN A GHOUL IN HIS TIME AND A DEFILER OF MIGHTY SEPULCHRES, A MOLESTER OF FORGOTTEN MYSTERIES.
REALLY BOSS, BILLY JOE.
YOU AINT GOTTA SHITTIN
CLINK


I REMEMBER HOW WE DELVED INTO THE GHOULS GRAVE AND HOW WE THRILLED AT THE PICTURE OF OURSELVES — THE GRAVE, THE PALE WATCHING MOON, THE HORRIBLE SHADOWS, THE GROTESQUE TREES, THE TITANIC BATS, THE ANTIQUE CHURCH, THE DANCING DEATH-FIRES, THE SICKENING ODORS, THE GENTLY MOANING NIGHTWIND, AND THE STRANGE, HALF HEARD DIRECTIONLESS BAYING OF SOME GIGANTIC HOUND ...

AT THIS SUGGESTION OF BAYING, WE PAUSED WITH A SHUDDER, FOR LEGEND TOLD HOW HE WHOM WE SOUGHT HAD BEEN FOUND IN THIS SELF SAME SPOT, TORN AND MANGLED BY SOME UNSPEAKABLE BEAST.
THEN OUR SPADES STRUCK A SUBSTANCE HARDER THAN THE DAMP MOULD, AND WITH GLISTENING EYES WE PRIED OPEN THE LID OF A ROTTING, MINERAL-ENCRUSTED OBLONG BOX.
THUNK
HOW WE GLOATED OVER THE CLEAN WHITE SKULL AND ITS LONG, FIRM TEETH AND ITS EYELESS SOCKETS THAT ONCE HAD GLOWED WITH A CHARNEL FEVER LIKE OUR OWN!
ONLY THEN DID WE NOTICE THAT IN THE COFFIN LAY AN AMULET OF CURIOUS AND EXOTIC DESIGN; ITS FEATURES REPELLANT IN THE EXTREME, SAVORING AT ONCE OF DEATH, BESTIALITY, AND MALEVOLENCE. WE IMMEDIATELY KNEW WE MUST POSSESS IT.
SEIZING THE GREEN JADE OBJECT, WE GAVE A LAST GLANCE AT THE BLEACHED AND CAVERN-EYED FACE OF ITS OWNER AND CLOSED UP THE GRAVE AS WE HAD FOUND IT

AS WE HASTENED AWAY, WE THOUGHT WE SAW THE BATS DESCEND IN A BODY TO THE EARTH WE HAD SO LATELY RIFLED, AS IF SEEKING SOME CURSED AND UNHOLY NOURISHMENT. BUT THE AUTUMN MOON SHONE WEAK AND PALE, AND WE COULD NOT BE SURE.

SO TOO, AS WE SAILED AWAY FROM HOLLAND, WE THOUGHT WE HEARD THE FAINT BAYING OF SOME LINGERING HOUND, BUT THE AUTUMN WIND MOANED SAD + WAN, AND WE COULD NOT BE SURE.

WHEN AT LAST WE REACHED ST JOHN'S HOME ON A DESERTED STRETCH OF GALVESTON ISLAND, WE SET ABOUT IDENTIFYING THE INSCRIBED CHARACTERS ON THE BASE OF OUR PRIZE, FOR, AS ALIEN TO SANITY AS THEY MIGHT APPEAR, TO US, THEY WERE NOT WHOLLY UNFAMILIAR

IMAGINE OUR TRIUMPH WHEN WE ESTABLISHED IT AS THE VERY THING WANTED OF IN THE FORBIDDEN NECRONOMICON OF THE MAD ARAB, ABDUL ALHAZRED, THE GHASTLY SOUL-SYMBOL OF THE CORPSE-EATING CULT OF INACCESSIBLE LENG, IN CENTRAL ASIA.
TINTA CHINA

IMAGIN" FURTHER THE DISTRACTION TO OUR STUDIES OCCASIONED BY THE STRANGE NEW SOUNDS THAT BEGAN TO PLAGUE OUR HOUSE. WHIRRING, FLAPPING NOISES + FUMBLINGS IN THE NIGHT, NOT ONLY AT THE DOORS, BUT THE WINDOWS AS WELL, BOTH LOWER + UPPER. INVESTIGATION REVEALED NOTHING, + WE ATTRIBUTED OUR FEARS TO THE DISTURBING PROPERTIES THE NECRONOMICON LAID TO OUR AMULET—& TO THOSE WHO WOULD POSSESS IT
SKONK
BUMP
RATTLE
BLAH BLAH
BLAH
STILL, WE COULD NOT DENY THE FAINT, DISTANT BAYING THAT NOW PENETRATED EVEN INTO THE SUBTERRANEAN CRYPT WHERE WE KEPT OUR GRISLY COLLECTION, AND WHERE THE AMULET NOW REPOSED IN ITS NICHE.
SCRITCH SCRITCH
WHAZZAT?
"H SHIT! IT MUST BE THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES!
FOUR DAYS LATER: WHILST WE WERE BOTH IN THE HIDDEN MUSEUM, THERE CAME A LOW, CAUTIOUS SCRATCHING AT THE SINGLE VAULT DOOR WHICH LED TO OUR SECRET STAIRCASE. OUR ALARM WAS MANIFOLD, FOR, BESIDES OUR FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN, THERE WAS ALWAYS THE DREADFUL POSSIBILITY THAT OUR MACABRE FANCIES SHOULD BECOME KNOWN TO THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

EXTINGUISHING THE LIGHT, WE CREPT TO THE DOOR AND FLUNG IT SUDDENLY OPEN, WHEREUPON WE FELT AN UNACCOUNTABLE BURST OF FETID AIR, + HEARD, AS IF RECEDING FAR AWAY, A COMBINATION OF RUSTLING, TITTERING, + ARTICULATE CHATTER, WITH THE BLACKEST OF APPREHENSIONS, WE REALIZED THAT THE LATTER WAS DEWOND A DOUBT IN THE DUTCH LANGUAGE!

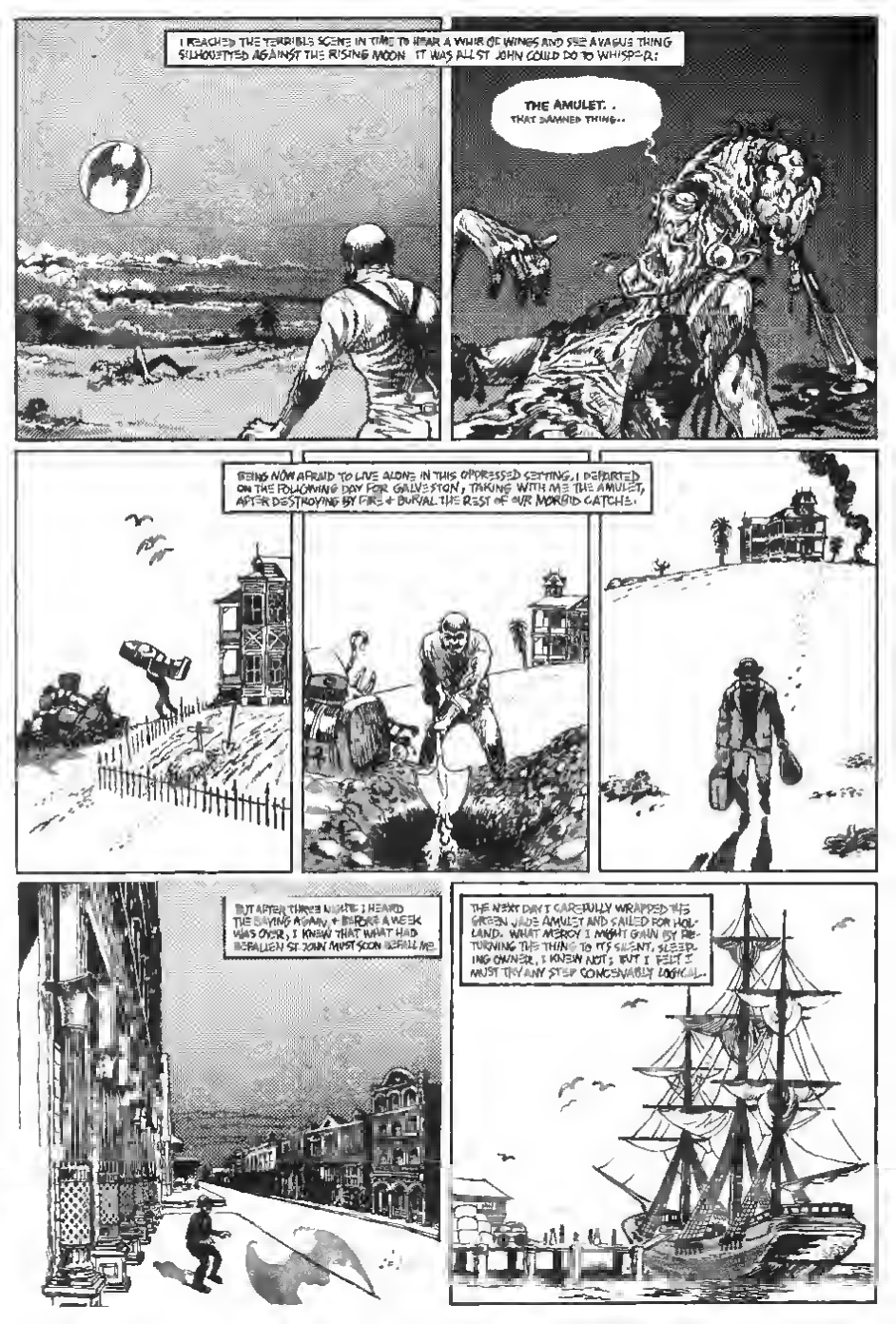
HEH HEH

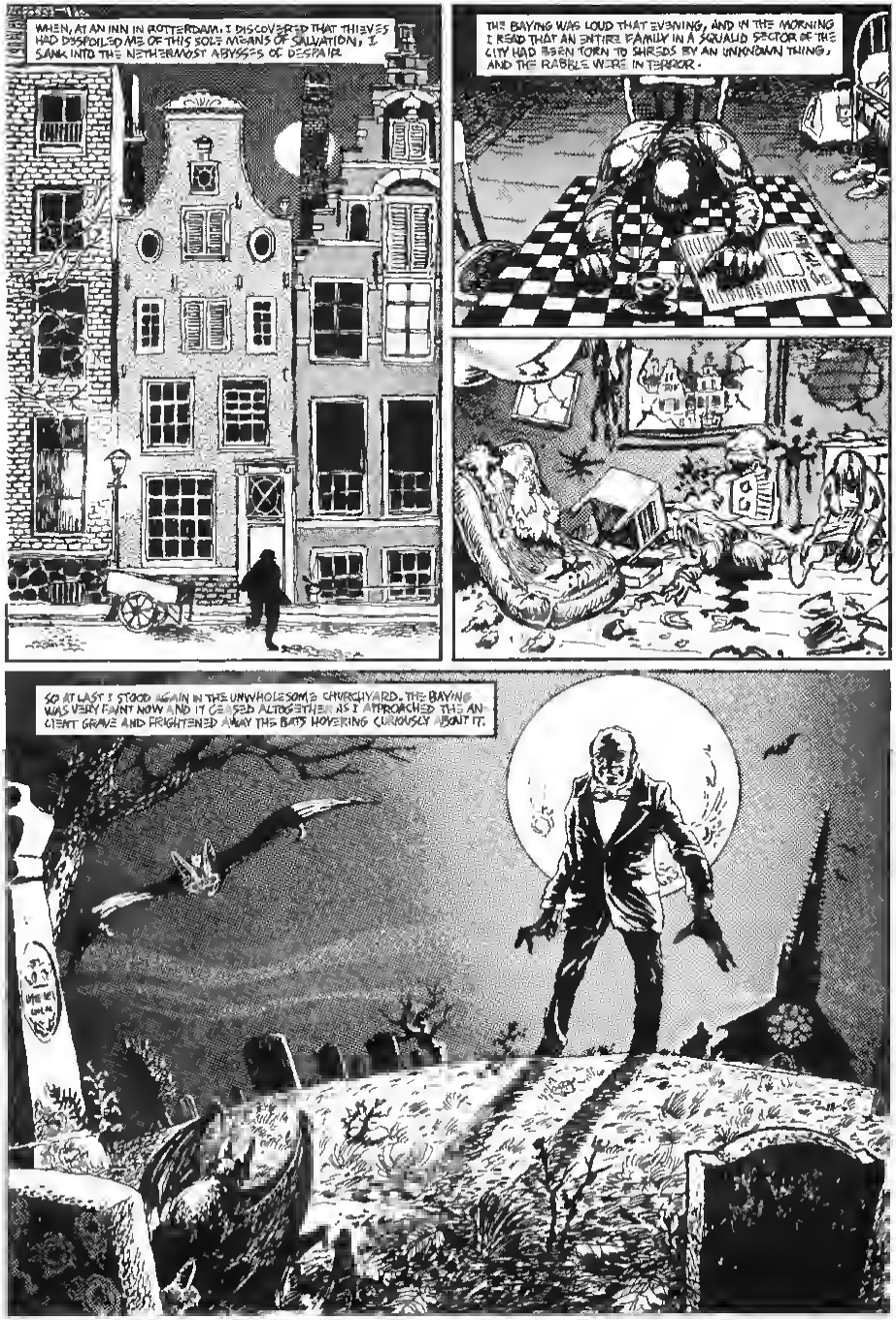
AN SWEAR! YOR CRAZY AS HELL, ST. JOHN. SNICKER

WACHT U VOOR DODEN DIE LEZEN

AFTER THAT, WE LIVED IN GROWING HORROR, FOR BIZARRE MANIFESTATIONS WERE BECOMING COMMONPLACE. FOOTPRINTS, UTTERLY IMPOSSIBLE TO DESCRIBE, WERE FOUND ON THE GROUNDS AND HORDES OF GREAT BATS BEGAN TO HAUNT THE EVENING SKIES. ABOVE ALL WAS THAT DAEMONIAC BAYING THAT ROLLED OVER THE WIND SWEPT DUNES, ALWAYS LOUDER AND LOUDER-

THE HORROR REACHED A CULMINATION ON NOV 16 WHEN ST JOHN WAS WALKING HOME AFTER DARK FROM THE DISMAL COACH STATION. HIS SCREAMS REACHED THE HOUSE, HALF A MILE AWAY.


I REACHED THE TERRIBLE SCENE IN TIME TO HEAR A WHIR OF WINGS AND SEE A VAGUE THING SILHOUETTED AGAINST THE RISING MOON. IT WAS ALL ST JOHN COULD DO TO WHISPER:
THE AMULET. . THAT DAMNED THING...
BEING NOW AFRAID TO LIVE ALONE IN THIS OPPRESSED SETTING, I DEPARTED ON THE FOLLOWING DAY FOR GALVESTON, TAKING WITH ME THE AMULET, AFTER DESTROYING BY FIRE & BURIAL THE REST OF OUR MORBID CATCH.
BUT AFTER THREE NIGHTS I HEARD THE BAYING AGAIN, & BEFORE A WEEK WAS OVER, I KNEW THAT WHAT HAD BEFALLEN ST JOHN MUST SOON BEFALL ME.
THE NEXT DAY I CAREFULLY WRAPPED THIS GREEN JADE AMULET AND SAILED FOR HOLLAND. WHAT MERCY I MIGHT GAIN BY RETURNING THE THING TO ITS SILENT, SLEEPING OWNER, I KNEW NOT; BUT I FELT I MUST TRY ANY STEP CONCEIVABLY LOGICAL.


WHEN, AT AN INN IN ROTTERDAM, I DISCOVERED THAT THIEVES HAD DISPOILED ME OF THIS SOLE MEANS OF SALVATION, I SANK INTO THE NETHERMOST ABYSSES OF DESPAIR.
THE BAYING WAS LOUD THAT EVENING, AND IN THE MORNING I READ THAT AN ENTIRE FAMILY IN A SQUALID SECTOR OF THE CITY HAD BEEN TORN TO SHREDS BY AN UNKNOWN THING, AND THE RABBLE WERE IN TERROR.
SO AT LAST I STOOD AGAIN IN THE UNWHOLESOME CHURCHYARD. THE BAYING WAS VERY FAINT NOW AND IT CEASED ALTOGETHER AS I APPROACHED THE ANCIENT GRAVE AND FRIGHTENED AWAY THE BATS HOVERING CURIOUSLY ABOUT IT.

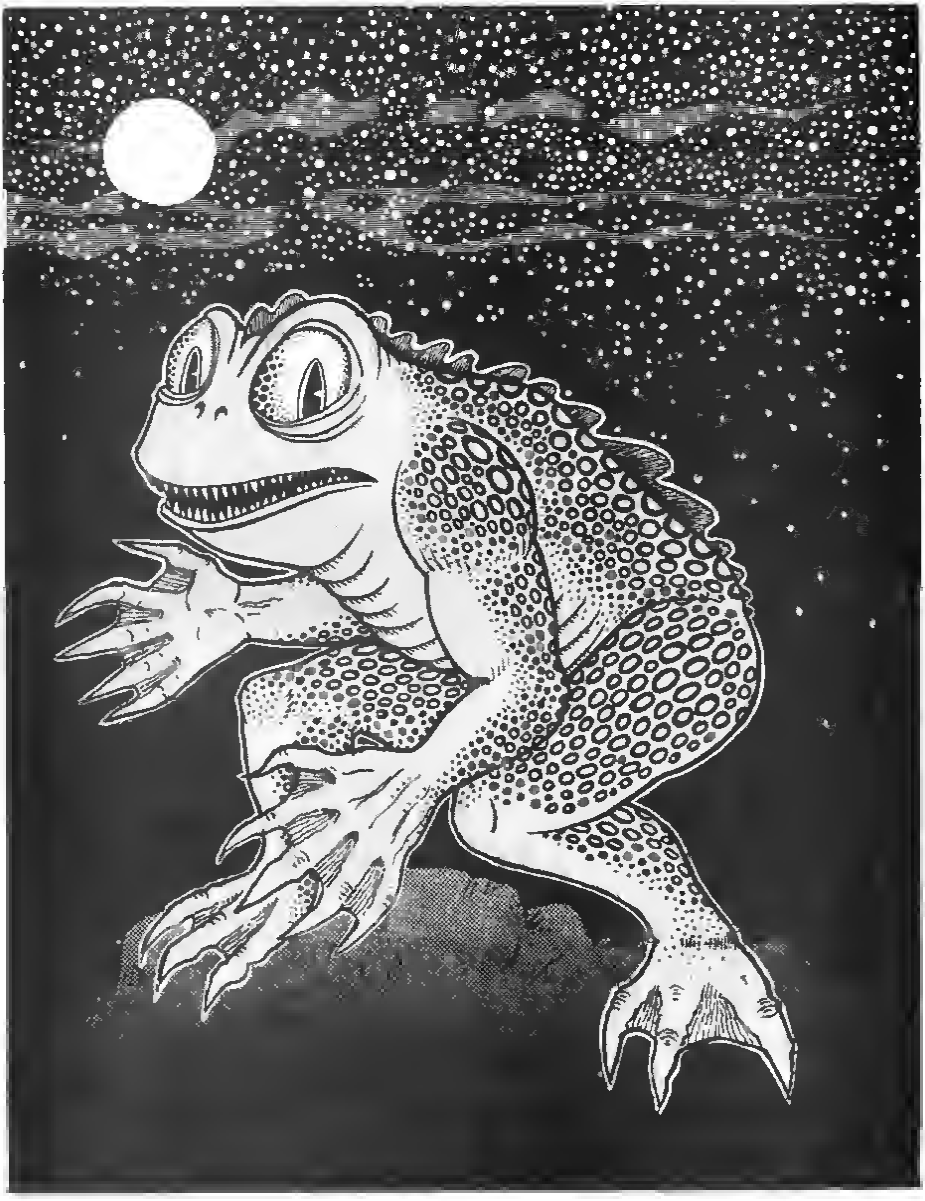
WHETHER TO PRAY, OR GIBBER OUT INSANE PLEAS AND APOLOGIES TO THE BONES THAT LAY WITHIN — WHATEVER MY REASON, I ATTACKED THE HALF FROZEN SOD AND DUG UNTIL I REACHED THE ROTTING OBLONG BOX.

REMOVING THE DAMP NITROUS COVER WAS THE LAST RATIONAL ACT I EVER PERFORMED.

FOR IN THE COFFIN LAY REVEALED, NOT THE CLEAN AND PLACID THING MY FRIEND AND I HAD ROBBED, BUT A NIGHTMARE CAKED AND CLOTTED WITH BLOODY SHREDS OF ALIEN FLESH AND HAIR, EMBRACED BY A MALIGNANT RETINUE OF SLEEPING BATS AND CLUTCHING IN ITS GORY CLAW THE FATEFUL AMULET OF GREEN JADE.

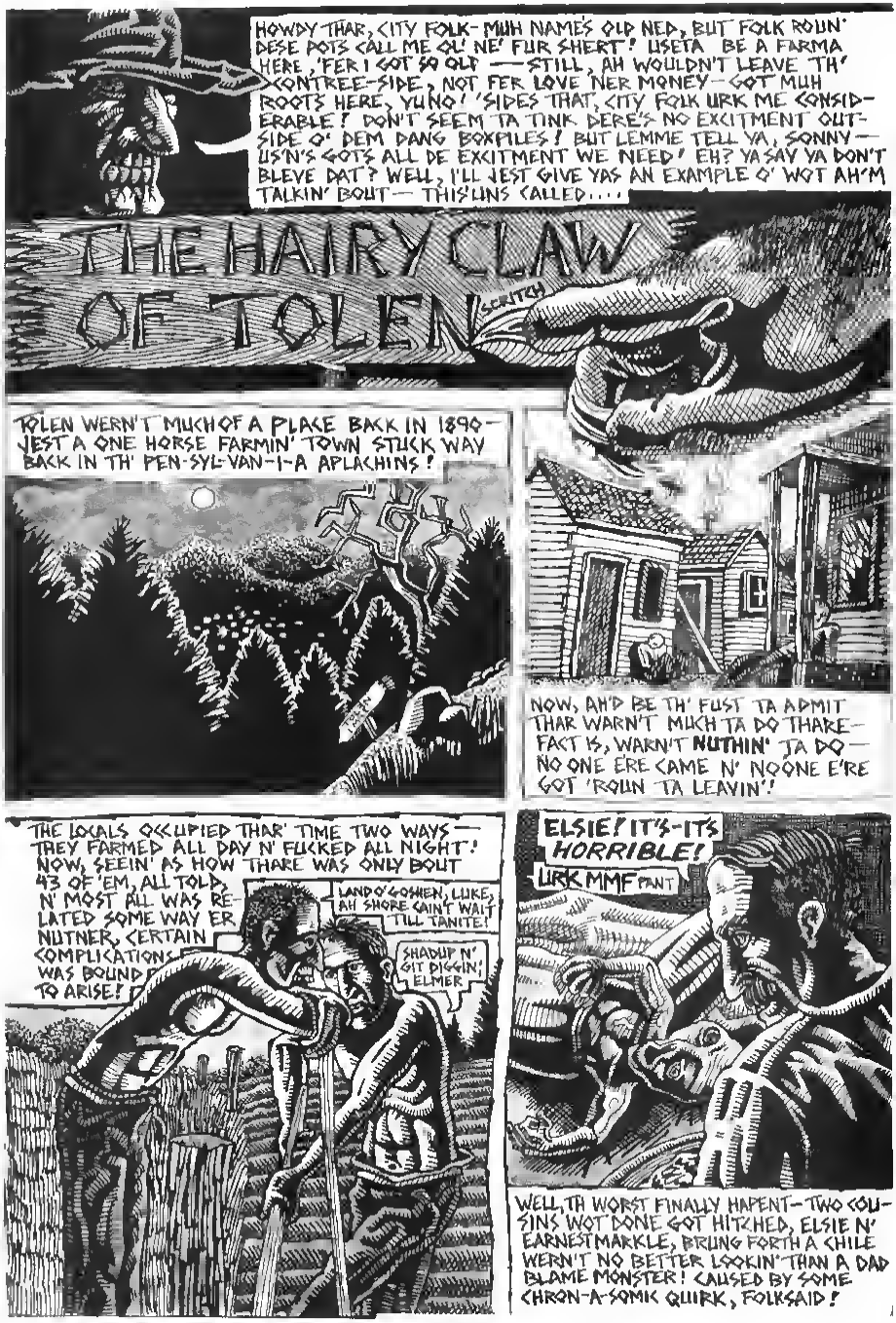
AS I SCREAMED AND RAN AWAY IDIOTICALLY, I HEARD THOSE GRINNING JAWS BEHIND ME GIVE A DEEP, SARDONIC BAY, AS OF SOME GIANT HOUND.

JAWS WITH SHARP, ENSANGUINED FANGS THAT YAWNED TWISTEDLY IN MOCKERY OF MY INEVITABLE DOOM!
END



NIGHT TOAD

S. DEITCH


HOWDY THAR, CITY FOLK- MUH NAMES OLD NED, BUT FOLK ROUN' DESE PARTS CALL ME OL' NE' FUR SHERT! USETA BE A FARMA HERE, 'FER I GOT SO OLD —STILL, AH WOULDN'T LEAVE TH' CONTREE-SIDE, NOT FER LOVE NER MONEY— GOT MUH ROOTS HERE, YUNO! 'SIDES THAT, CITY FOLK URK ME CONSIDERABLE! DON'T SEEM TA TINK DERE'S NO EXCITMENT OUTSIDE O' DEM DANG BOXFILES! BUT LEMME TELL YA, SONNY— US'N'S GOTS ALL DE EXCITMENT WE NEED! EH? YA SAY YA DON'T BLEVE DAT? WELL, I'LL JEST GIVE YAS AN EXAMPLE O' WOT AH'M TALKIN' BOUT— THIS'LINS CALLED....
THE HAIRY CLAW OF TOLEN
SCRITCH
TOLEN WERN'T MUCH OF A PLACE BACK IN 1890— JEST A ONE HORSE FARMIN' TOWN STUCK WAY BACK IN TH' PEN-SYL-VAN-I-A APLACHINS!
NOW, AH'D BE TH' FUST TA ADMIT THAR WARN'T MUCH TA DO THARE— FACT IS, WARN'T NUTHIN' TA DO— NO ONE ERE CAME N' NOONE E'RE GOT 'ROUN TA LEAVIN'!
THE LOCALS OCCUPIED THAR' TIME TWO WAYS— THEY FARMED ALL DAY N' FUCKED ALL NIGHT! NOW, SEEIN' AS HOW THARE WAS ONLY BOUT 43 OF 'EM, ALL TOLD, N' MOST ALL WAS RELATED SOME WAY ER NUTNER, CERTAIN COMPLICATIONS WAS BOUND TO ARISE!
LAND O' GOSHEN, LUKE, AH SHORE CAIN'T WAIT TILL TANITE!
SHADUP N' GIT DIGGIN', ELMER
ELSIE! IT'S-IT'S HORRIBLE!
URK MMF PANT
WELL, TH WORST FINALLY HAPENT— TWO COUSINS WOT DONE GOT HITCHED, ELSIE N' EARNEST MARKLE, BRUNG FORTH A CHILE WERN'T NO BETTER LOOKIN' THAN A DAD BLAME MONSTER! CAUSED BY SOME CHRON-A-SOMIC QUIRK, FOLKS AID!

ELSIE DIED FROM DELIVERIN' A 20 POUND BABY. TH' CHILE WAS ALL LEFT N HE DE-TERMINED TA RAISE IT PROPER!
POOR EARNEST HAD
I'LL TAKE CARE O' HIM ELSIE .. MAKE YOU PROUD
YUNG MARKLE GROWED SO FAST HE WAS NEAR TALL'S EARNEST BY TH' TIME HE WAS 5! TH' TOWNFOK DINT ACCEPT HIM 'N KEPT NO SECRET ABOUT IT!
JEST TRYN IGNORE 'EM SON, THEY'RE TH' FOOLS!
LORDI GOD JOE, AIN'T 'E UGLY
AH THINK WE OUGHTER RUN 'EM OUTA TOWN, FO' HE HURTS SOM BODY!
URK?
LAWD SAKES BOY!
BOP
EAT ROCK HAIRY CLAW
COURSE EARNEST MARKLE COULN'T AFFORD HIGH-CLASS DOCTERIN FER TH' BOY, N' AS YUNG GOT OLDER HE GOT UGLIER — N TH' TOWNFOLK GOT MEANER! YUNG'S HATRED FOR THEM GROWED UNTIL HE COULN'T KEEP IT IN 'IM NO LONGER! ONE NIGHT — AH TINK 'E WAS BOUT 17 AT TH' TIME — HE EXERCISED HIS RAGE ON HIS CHIEF TORMENTER'S PRIZE HUNTIN' DOG!
ULYSES! WOTS ALL THIS BLAM ED YAMMERIN' A BOUT?
ROWR HYA-GRR
RARRF!
SAME DOG THAT HAD BEEN ORDERED TO ATTACK HIM ON TH' MAIN STREET O' TOLEN THET AFTERNOON — YUNG DARN'T A FOUGHT BACK THEN!
NOW IF THEM FOKS HAD RE-LIZED HOW STRONG N FAST THIS BOY WAS, THEY MITA MINDED THAR MANNERS A BIT! 'FOR OL' SIMPSON KNEW WOT HIT 'IM, YUNG'D BURST OUTA TH' DARK, NOKED IM DOWN LIKE HE WAS A BLADE O' GRASS, N' ESCAPED THRU TH' TREES!
HYUK!
THOK
YARB!
SNATCH

THO' HE DIN'T SEE NUTHIN', SIMPSON NATCHERLY FIGGERED T'WAS YUNG MARKLE WOT HAD KILT HIS DAWG! HE GATHERED UP ALL TH' NEIGBOR-IN' MENFOLK N' TOLD WOT'D HAPPENT!

AH'M TELLIN YA BOYS, IF'N AH WERN'T SO FAST THET AH OUT-MANUVERED 'IM, SAME THING WOUDA HAPENT TA ME!

BY THUNDER, THET BOYS GONE TOO FAR THIS TIME!

GAWSH

MEANWHAL, T'WAS JEST ANOTHA QUIET EVENIN' AT TH' MARKLE SHACK! YUNG WERN'T WERRIED ER NOTHIN LIKE THET CAUSE HE DINT FIGGER 'E DONE NOTHIN' WRONG - JEST KILLED A MEAN DAWG WOT HAD BEEN PERSISTENTLY ATTACK-IN' HIM - EVEN WHEN SIMPSON COME OUT 'E DINT USE HIS CLAW ON 'IM - JES KNOKED IM OUTER HIS WAY, NICE N EASY! WELL ANYWHO, YUNG WAS READIN' ONE O' THEM DIME WESTERN NOVELS - OL' EARNEST WAS, SITTIN IN TH' CORNER KNITTIN'!

KNIT 1 PERL 2 KNIT 2 PERL 1 CAST

AN EMPTY BOTTLE O' MOONSHINE SET ON TH' TABLE!

MUMBLMUMBL GOLLEE MUMBLMUMBL

COWARD

KRESH

JUMPIN JEE-HOSIFAT - AH DROPPED A STITCH!

BEST (GRUNT) SEE WOT IN TAR-NATION ALL THIS COMOTION'S BOUT! LORDY, YUNG TH' WHOLE DAYUM TOWN'S OUT THAR!

THE CRITTER O YOURN DONE THET TA ME DOG MARKL N WE COME TA SEE HE DON'T DO NUTHIN LIKE THET AGIN

YA'L HAVE TAKE ME FIRST, SIMPSON!

NHURF

NO TROUBLE AT ALL, OLD TIMER!

WOOMPER

GIT READY, CLAW-YER NEXT!!
YEW BOYS SROUND TH' PLACE-I'M GOIN IN AFTER IM!
W-WHERE YA HIDIN', CLAW?
TOO
SLAM
KORR
YIII
SAAA
YUNG WAS MIGHTY RILED BY THEN-
OL' SIMPSON NE'ER HAD A CHANCE!
EEEYIIII
BLAARG
RRRG
SNORT
WODYA RECKON'S GOIN ON IN THAR, CLEM?
SOUNDS TA ME LAK SIMPSON MAY NEED A HAND!
TH' MEN GOT JEST BOUT TA TH' DOOR WHEN IT FLUNG OPEN, JEST LONG NUFF FER TH' MANGLED CARCASSES O' SIMPSON N HIS DOG TA CUM FLYIN' OUT, THEN SLAMED SHUT AGIN!

WELL, THAT LIL' GESTURE CHANGED A FEW MINDS, ALL RIGHT! HEE HEE
PPA! I AIN'T GOIN IN THAR!
I AIN'T NEETHA, SON! CHOKE
AH SEZ WE BURN IM OUT!
THAS UH GOOD IDEE BY ME!
THEY PUT TH' TORCH TU THET OL' SHACK N SHE BLEW UP LAK DRY KINDLIN'!
WOOF!
THEY WATCHED THAT BLAZE TILL MORNIN, WHEN THE EMBERS FINALLY BURNED OUT, BUT NO ONE SEED TH' CLAW LEAVE - THEY FIGGERED HE'D FRYED FER SURE N' SET ABOUT FINDIN' HIS CARCASS IN TH' RUIN!
M-MAX! AH TINK AH FOUND SUMPIN! LOOKY HERE!
NAW - THETS JEST TH' OL' MAN! AH DON'T GIT IT - THET CLAW AIN'T NO-WHERE TA BE FOUND!!
HEY BOYS! HERE'S TH' ANSWER!
I'LL BE DAMNED IF'N THET SUNVABITCH DINT DIG HISSELF OUT RAT UN-DER R NOSES! ELSE THEY HAD UH TRAPDOOR!
WOUNTA BEEN HARD WITH HIS CLAW!
HUFF PANT
YEP, BY THET TIME YUNG WAS FIFTEEN MILE ER SO OUTA TOLEN, DEEP IN TH' WOODS WHER NOBODY'D FIND IM

WAHL, NONE O' THEM TOLENITES WAS TOO ANXIOUS TA GO CRAWLIN DOWN THAR AFTER IM, SO THEY RECKONED THEY'D PUT IN UH FULL NIGHT AN' WENT HOME! CUPLA WEEKS LATER THEY GOT ROUND TA TALKIN' BOUT ORGANIZIN' A SEARCH PARTY BUT NUTHIN ERE COME OF IT! TRUTH IS, WHEN CLAW DINT CUM BACK AFTER 'EM, THEY ALL KINDA LOST INTERST IN TH' WHOLE AFFAIR — WHICH WAS FINE BY YUNG, WHO WAS HAVIN' A HIGH TIME UP THAR IN THEM MOUNTAINS, LIVING TH' GOOD LIFE! SO IT WENT FER TH' NEXT FIFTY YEARS — NO ONE HERD NARY A HOOT FROM TOLEN OR YUNG! THEN ONE SUMMER DAY, THINGS CHANGED — YUNG WAS LAYIN' UP AGAINST A TREE SNOOZIN'! RIGHT UP THAR IN YEARS HE WAS TOO, BUT HE WERN'T NONE TH WORSE FER IT.....

.. HE DIN'T SEE THET RABID FOX THAR, CREEPIN' UP BESIDE 'IM!

ZZZZZZ SLUG SLOWER

HSSSSS

YARG!?

CHOMP

SANK THEM CHOPPERS RAT IN YUNG'S LEG, 'E DID!

RRRARG!

WELL, THET FOX MET TH' SAME SWEET JUSTICE AS SIMPSON N HIS DAWG, ONLY THIS TIME...

BLURB!

LATE!

RORWR!

KRAK

TH' GERM TOOK EFFECT IMMEDIATLY — YUNG, HELL-BENT TA SINK HIS TEETH IN TH' FIRST THING 'E SAW, STUMBLED DOWN TH. MOUNTAIN LOOKIN' FER PREY!

RANT SOBER RAVE

...SHE BALANCED HER SCALE.

HRUF!

HISSSS

JEST A LITTLE BIT TOO...

SWISH

ONLY FATE COULDA HAD IT THET TH' FIRST PLACE HE COME TO THET DAY WAS...

TOLEN STRANGER GOT OUT!

IF'N HE'D A BEEN IN HIS RITE MIND, I'M SURE YUNG WOULDA JEST WALKED OUTA THAR'- HE HAD NO QUARREL WITH TOLEN — SIMPSON 'N' HIM'D SETTLED THAT SCORE LONG AGO! BUT RAVIN' MAD LAK HE WAS, 'TH' CLAW' DINT EVEN RECOGNIZE TH' PLACE! HE MIGHT NOT HAVE ANYWAY, 'CAUSE 'TWERN'T TH' SAME AT ALL— DINT LOOK LAK NOBODY'D LIVED THAR' IN A MONTH O' SUNDAYS!

YUNG STOOD THAR FER THE LONGEST TIME, BELLERIN' OUT HIS CHALLENGE FER ANY WHO'D HEAR IT!

ROWR

AT LENGTH, ONE O' THEM BATTERED DOORS BEGUN TO CREAK OPEN!

SQREEEE

THEN A NUTHER STARTED UP, AND A NUTHER, TILL THEY WAS ALL STANDIN' AGAPE!

GRUNT

RUMMF

KACHOMP!

CRUNCH

SQUNCH SPLUK

AWK! YERK!

B'FORE OL' YUNG EVEN KNOWED WOT WAS HAPPENIN', THEM TOLENITES WAS ON 'IM — 'N' WOT A MEAN HUNGRY BUNCH THEY WAS, TOO! PICKED THEM BONES CLEAN FASTER THAN YA COULD SAY *BILLY B'DAMNED*! SEEMS THET THEM FOLKS WHO'D BATTLED TH' CLAW DINT LEARN NUTHIN' FROM TH' WHOLE EXPERIENCE, NEVER SUSPECTED IT WAS THEM JUGGLED CHRON-E-SOMES WOT MADE HIM SO BLAMED UGLY! THEY JEST KEPT FUCKIN' THAR KIN-FOLK LAK ALWAYS! TH' YUNG'UNS GROWED UP FAST N' BIG, N' DIED EARLY! DURIN' TH' FIFTY YEARS YUNG WAS HIDIN', TOLEN SEEN FIFTEEN GENERATIONS, EACH ONE WIERDER THAN TH' ONE B'FORE IT! PURTY SOON WERN'T NO ONE LEFT 'CEPT TH' CREW O' MONSTERS YUNG RUN UP AGINST! WELP, T-WERN'T TOO LONG AFTER THAT TH' OUTSIDE FOLKS COME IN, BUILT A ROAD THRU TOLEN — THE TOLENITES FOLLERED YUNGS LEAD N' TOOK TA TH' HILLS! THEY'RE STILL UP THAR TOO, ROBBIN' LIVESTOCK TA GIT BY! TAKE HEED, ALL YOU WEEKEND NATURE LOVERS — THARS VERY FEW WHO'VE GOT LOST IN THEM APLACHINS N' COME OUT TA TELL A BOUT IT! WELL — AH'L BE SEEIN' YA! XXX OL' NE'

© 1971 CHARLES DALLAS

IT IS A MISTAKE TO FANCY THAT HORROR IS ALWAYS ASSOCIATED WITH DARKNESS AND SOLITUDE. I FOUND IT IN THE GLARE OF MID-AFTERNOON IN A SHABBY ROOMING HOUSE..
H.P. LOVECRAFT'S
DUNWICH HORROR

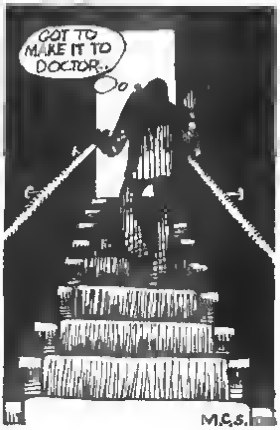
MY STORY BEGINS IN A PROSAIC BOSTON APARTMENT.
I'M SURE YOU'LL LIKE THE ROOM MR DERLETH.
JUST AS LONG AS IT'S QUIET

OH, IT'S QUIET! THE ONLY NEIGHBOR IS DR MUNOZ UPSTAIRS-HE HELPS IN EMERGENCIES, BUT HE'S REALLY RETIRED..
GOOD TO REMEMBER IF MY HEART ACTS UP AGAIN..

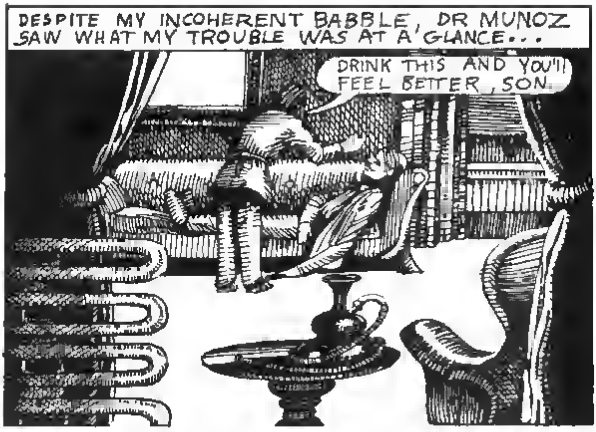
I HAD BEEN IN THE ROOMING HOUSE FOR THREE WEEKS WHEN THE FIRST ODD INCIDENT OCCURED. I HAD NOTICED THE SMELL OF AMMONIA, AND LOOKING UP.
THAT CRAP IS LEAKING THRU MY CEILING!! I'D BETTER TELL THE LANDLADY.

I TOLD HER, THEN HEARD HER ASCEND THE STAIRS TO DR MUNOZ'S ROOM. THE DRIPPING STOPPED.
DR MUNOZ WAS BECOMING A COURIOUS FIGURE TO ME. HE NEVER LEFT HIS ROOM, AND I COULD HEAR THE FAINT DRONE OF AN ENGINE THAT HADN'T STOPPED IN THE THREE WEEKS I'D BEEN THERE...

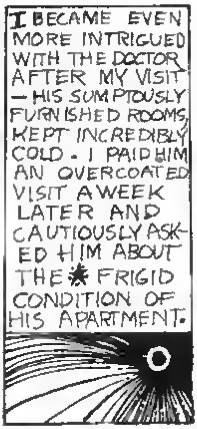
THEN, A WEEK LATER, THE EVENT I'D BEEN DREADING...
OH GOD!! MY HEART


GOT TO MAKE IT TO DOCTOR..
M.C.S.

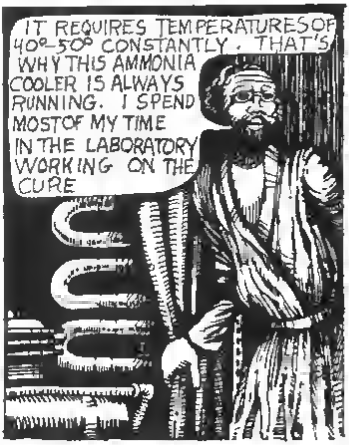
MY FRENZIED KNOCKING WAS SOON ANSWERED. AS THE DOOR OPENED I WAS IMMEDIATELY CHILLED BY A BLAST OF COOL AIR FROM THE DOCTOR'S APARTMENT.
3


DESPITE MY INCOHERENT BABBLE, DR MUNOZ SAW WHAT MY TROUBLE WAS AT A GLANCE...
DRINK THIS AND YOU'LL FEEL BETTER, SON.

NEVER HESITATE TO COME TO ME IF THIS HAPPENS AGAIN, MR. DERLETH — I AM ONE OF DEATH'S BITTEREST SWORN ENEMIES !!


I BECAME EVEN MORE INTRIGUED WITH THE DOCTOR AFTER MY VISIT — HIS SUMPTOUSLY FURNISHED ROOMS, KEPT INCREDIBLY COLD. I PAID HIM AN OVERCOATED VISIT A WEEK LATER AND CAUTIOUSLY ASKED HIM ABOUT THE FRIGID CONDITION OF HIS APARTMENT.

IT'S VERY SIMPLE, REALLY I CONTRACTED A RATHER, WELL, BIZARRE DISEASE 18 YEARS AGO. THE TREATMENT IS UNIQUE...


IT REQUIRES TEMPERATURES OF 40°-50° CONSTANTLY. THAT'S WHY THIS AMMONIA COOLER IS ALWAYS RUNNING. I SPEND MOST OF MY TIME IN THE LABORATORY WORKING ON THE CURE

MY RESEARCHES ARE SOMEWHAT, UH, UNCONVENTIONAL. MY MORE CONSERVATIVE COLLEAGUES WERE APALLED BY SOME OF MY TECHNIQUES, BUT THEY WERE FOOLS ANYWAY...

IN THE FOLLOWING WEEKS I BEGAN TO NOTICE MORE OF THE DOCTOR'S STRANGE HABITS. I HAD NEVER SEEN HIM TAKE A BITE OF FOOD, AND HE BEGAN TO BURN EGYPTIAN INCENSE INCESSANTLY. DESPITE THE DOCTOR'S PRECAUTIONS, HE WAS BEGINNING TO LOSE GROUND FAST. HIS WORK IN THE LAB WAS HIS CONSUMING INTEREST, AND HE TOOK FREQUENT BATHS IN THE FOUL SMELLING LIQUIDS HE COMPOUNDED THERE..

I'M IN THE BATH DERLETH. DON'T LET THE FUMES BOTHER YOU...

AS HIS CONDITION WORSENED, DR. MUNOZ SPENT MORE AND MORE TIME WRITING LONG TECHNICAL LETTERS TO HIS COLLEAGUES IN OBSCURE PARTS OF THE WORLD...

WITH MY HELP, THE DOCTOR ENLARGED HIS AMMONIA PIPING SYSTEM TO PRODUCE EVEN COLDER TEMPERATURES.

THE FINAL HORROR BEGAN ONE NIGHT AS I LAY SLEEPING. FIRST I WAS RUDELY AWAKENED BY

HUMP

HELP!! COME... PLEASE

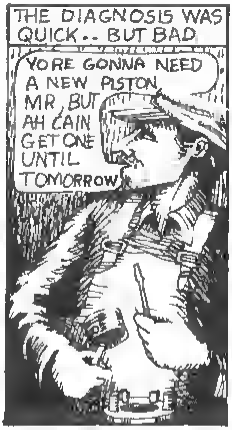
I DASHED UP THE STAIRS TO THE DR'S APARTMENT..

AND FOUND HIM IN COMPLETE PANIC!!

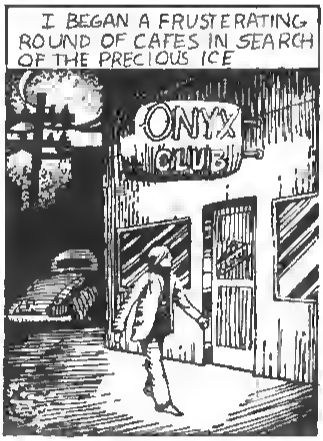
THE PUMP HAS STOPPED! WE MUST FIX IT NOW!!! IT'S GETTING WARMER!!!

I TRIED TO FIX THE PUMP BUT MY EFFORTS WERE TO NO AVAIL. I IMMEDIATELY LEFT TO FIND AN ALL NIGHT GARAGE AND A MECHANIC THAT WOULD MAKE HOUSE CALLS...

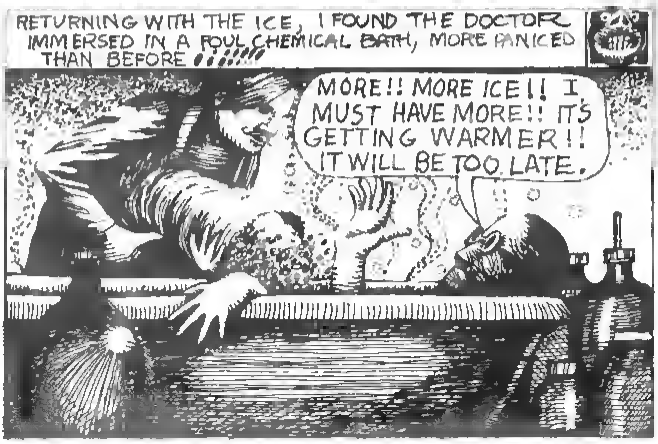
WHEN I RETURNED WITH THE MECHANIC...
DR MUNOZ! YOUR FACE?!! WHAT..
NEVER MIND! IS THIS THE MECHANIC?


THE DIAGNOSIS WAS QUICK.. BUT BAD
YO'RE GONNA NEED A NEW PISTON MR, BUT AH CAIN GET ONE UNTIL TOMORROW

AFTER DISMISSING THE MECHANIC, THE DOCTOR BEGAN A BERSERK PLEA.
ICE! ICE! I NEED ALL THE ICE YOU CAN GET!!


I BEGAN A FRUSTERATING ROUND OF CAFES IN SEARCH OF THE PRECIOUS ICE
ONYX CLUB

AND WHEN I AT LAST FOUND SOME...
I'M SORRY SIR, BUT THAT'S ALL WE CAN SPARE.


RETURNING WITH THE ICE, I FOUND THE DOCTOR IMMERSED IN A FOUL CHEMICAL BATH, MORE PANICED THAN BEFORE!!!!!!
MORE!! MORE ICE!! I MUST HAVE MORE!! IT'S GETTING WARMER!! IT WILL BE TOO LATE.

REALISING IT WOULD SOON BE DAWN, I COLLARED A WINO, AND, GIVING HIM SOME MONEY TO KEEP THE DOCTOR SUPPLIED WITH ICE, SET OUT TO FIND A PUMP PISTON AND A MECHANIC TO INSTALL IT...

AFTER A THREE HOUR SEARCH I WAS FINALLY REWARDED...
HERE'S YOUR PART MR. DERLETH, JUST TELL THE MECHANIC WHERE YOU WANT TO GO..
ICMB

THE MECHANIC RUSHED ACROSS TOWN TO THE HOUSE. WE STOPPED..

AND DASHED UP THE STAIRS.

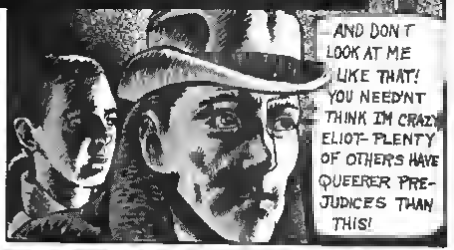
TO FIND THE LANDLADY AND OTHER TENANTS GATHERED OUTSIDE THE DOCTOR'S DOOR...
WHAT'S GOING ON ? WHERE'S THE MAN I HIRED TO DELIVER ICE ?

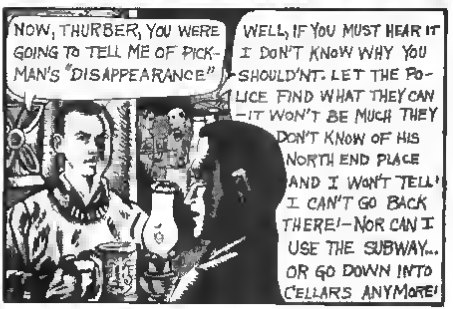
HE MADE TWO DELIVERIES, THEN RAN OUT OF THE ROOM SCREAMING. THEN THIS HORRIBLE SMELL BEGAN TO COME OUT OF THE ROOM - SO I TOLD LUIS TO PICK THE LOCK...
IT'S TOO LATE FOR THAT..

KRAK!

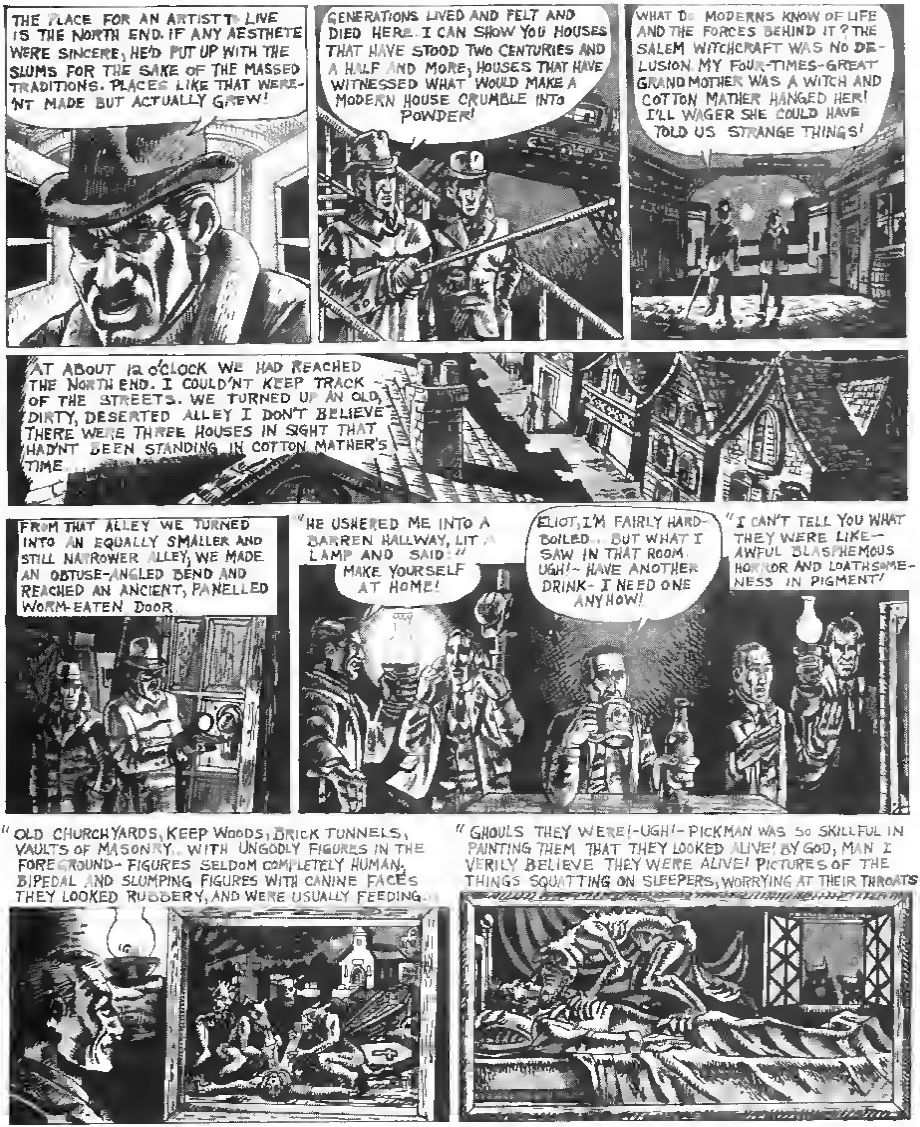
I RUSHED TO THE NOTE, READ IT AND IMMEDIATELY BURNED IT. THE WORDS THERE WERE TOO INSANE TO IMMEDIATELY COMPREHEND...
BUT I'LL NEVER FORGET WHAT THAT GORE STAINED MESSAGE ON THE DOCTORS TABLE SAID..
End is here - no more
we - too warm
tissues can't last
artificial preservation
of organs good theory but
couldn't last forever
for you see I died
the last time I was
eighteen years ago..
Mum

# PICKMAN'S MODEL



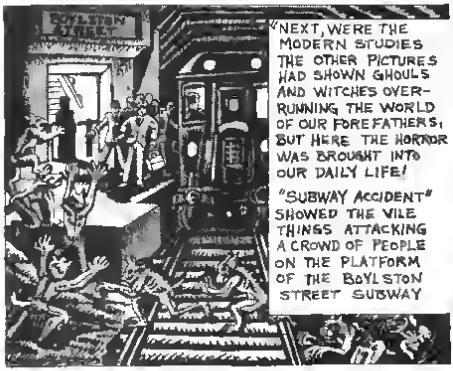


I'VE DROPPED RICHARD UPTON PICKMAN AS YOU MIGHT HAVE SURMISED. I'VE GOOD REASONS TO WARRENT SO. IT CAME ABOUT SOME NIGHTS BACK. AT PICKMAN'S ART SHOW AT THE CLUB, YOU WERE THERE -
"... BOSTON NEVER HAD A GREATER PAINTER THAN PICKMAN. HE WAS, OR STILL IS, A GENIUS, THOUGH A MORBID ONE. I WAS MAKING NOTES FOR A MONOGRAPH ON WEIRD ART, AND I FOUND PICKMAN A MINE OF DATA AND SUGGESTIONS WHEN I CAME TO DEVELOP IT ..."
WELL, WELL; PICKMAN - AN IMPRESSIVE GALLERY SHOW THOUGH I THINK YOU'LL BE BARRED FROM THE CLUB FOR IT -
YOU'RE TOO KIND, DR REID!
THOUGH YOU'VE GOT BAD TASTE IN SUBJECT-MATTER YOUR TECHNIQUE IS FASCINATING! WHEREVER IN THUNDER DID YOU GET SUCH IDEAS AND VISIONS?
HA, HA, HA---
"DR REID SAID PICKMAN REPELLED HIM MORE AND MORE EVERYDAY, AND ALMOST FRIGHTENED HIM TOWARD THE LAST- THAT THE FELLOW'S FEATURES AND EXPRESSIONS WERE SLOWLY DEVELOPING IN A WAY HE DIDN'T LIKE, IN A WAY THAT WAS'NT HUMAN."
SEE HERE, THURBER YOU'RE INTERESTED IN WEIRD ART: HOW'D YOU LIKE TO SEE MY "SECRET" STUDIO WHERE I CAN REALLY PAINT WHAT I WANT?
UP THERE I'VE CAPTURED THE NIGHT-SPIRIT OF ANTIQUE HORROR AND PAINT THINGS I COULDN'T THINK OF HERE! I WON'T TELL THESE OLD MAIDS OF IT— WITH REID, DAMN HIM, WHISPERING EVEN AS IT IS THAT I'M A SORT OF MONSTER GOING THROUGH REVERSE EVOLUTION!
"I WAS EXTREMELY ANXIOUS TO SEE HIS NEW STUDIO. WE TOOK THE ELEVATED TO SOUTH STATION."
YOU KNOW THERE ARE THINGS THAT WON'T DO FOR NEWBURY STREET AND THE ART CLUB-THINGS OUT OF PLACE THERE AND CAN'T BE CONCIEVED THERE, ANYHOW BACK BAY ISN'T BOSTON- IT ISN'T ANYTHING YET; BECAUSE IT'S HAD NO TIME TO PICK UP MEMORIES AND LOCAL SPIRITS. I WANT TO PAINT THE GHOSTS OF BEINGS WHO HAVE LOOKED ON HELL AND KNOWN THE MEANING OF WHAT THEY SAW!


THE PLACE FOR AN ARTIST TO LIVE IS THE NORTH END. IF ANY AESTHETE WERE SINCERE, HE'D PUT UP WITH THE SLUMS FOR THE SAKE OF THE MASSED TRADITIONS. PLACES LIKE THAT WEREN'T MADE BUT ACTUALLY GREW!
GENERATIONS LIVED AND FELT AND DIED HERE. I CAN SHOW YOU HOUSES THAT HAVE STOOD TWO CENTURIES AND A HALF AND MORE, HOUSES THAT HAVE WITNESSED WHAT WOULD MAKE A MODERN HOUSE CRUMBLE INTO POWDER!
WHAT DO MODERNS KNOW OF LIFE AND THE FORCES BEHIND IT? THE SALEM WITCHCRAFT WAS NO DELUSION. MY FOUR-TIMES-GREAT GRANDMOTHER WAS A WITCH AND COTTON MATHER HANGED HER! I'LL WAGER SHE COULD HAVE TOLD US STRANGE THINGS!
AT ABOUT 12 O'CLOCK WE HAD REACHED THE NORTH END. I COULDN'T KEEP TRACK OF THE STREETS. WE TURNED UP AN OLD, DIRTY, DESERTED ALLEY I DON'T BELIEVE THERE WERE THREE HOUSES IN SIGHT THAT HADN'T BEEN STANDING IN COTTON MATHER'S TIME.
FROM THAT ALLEY WE TURNED INTO AN EQUALLY SMALLER AND STILL NARROWER ALLEY; WE MADE AN OBTUSE-ANGLED BEND AND REACHED AN ANCIENT, PANELLED WORM-EATEN DOOR.
"HE USHERED ME INTO A BARREN HALLWAY, LIT A LAMP AND SAID:" MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME!
ELIOT, I'M FAIRLY HARD-BOILED... BUT WHAT I SAW IN THAT ROOM... UGH!~ HAVE ANOTHER DRINK~ I NEED ONE ANYHOW!
"I CAN'T TELL YOU WHAT THEY WERE LIKE— AWFUL BLASPHEMOUS HORROR AND LOATHSOMENESS IN PIGMENT!"
"OLD CHURCHYARDS, KEEP WOODS, BRICK TUNNELS, VAULTS OF MASONRY... WITH UNGODLY FIGURES IN THE FOREGROUND~ FIGURES SELDOM COMPLETELY HUMAN, BIPEDAL AND SLUMPING FIGURES WITH CANINE FACES THEY LOOKED RUBBERY, AND WERE USUALLY FEEDING...
"GHOULS THEY WERE!~UGH!~ PICKMAN WAS SO SKILLFUL IN PAINTING THEM THAT THEY LOOKED ALIVE! BY GOD, MAN I VERILY BELIEVE THEY WERE ALIVE! PICTURES OF THE THINGS SQUATTING ON SLEEPERS, WORRYING AT THEIR THROATS

"THERE WAS ONE CALLED "THE LESSON"- THE NAMELESS DOG THINGS WERE TEACHING A SMALL CHILD TO FEED LIKE THEMSELVES. THE PRICE OF A CHANGELING — THE GHOULS LEFT THEIR SPAWN IN CRADLES IN EXCHANGE FOR HUMAN BABES THEY STEAL. THE GHOULS WERE DEVELOPED FROM MORTALS!

"I WONDERED WHAT BECAME OF THE GHOUL'S YOUNG AND FOUND OUT IN THE NEXT CANVAS. A SCENE OF AN ANCIENT PURITAN FAMILY. EVERY FACE WAS REVERANT BUT ONE REFLECTED THE MOCKERY OF THE PIT. IN A SPIRIT OF SUPREME IRONY PICKMAN HAD PAINTED HIS OWN FEATURES ON THE GHOUL-SPAWN.

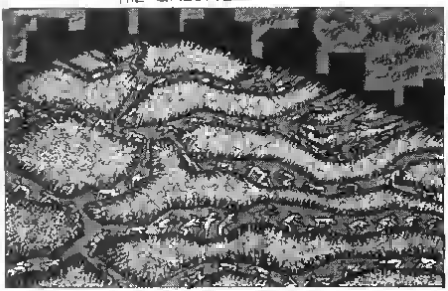


"NEXT, WERE THE MODERN STUDIES THE OTHER PICTURES HAD SHOWN GHOULS AND WITCHES OVER-RUNNING THE WORLD OF OUR FOREFATHERS; BUT HERE THE HORROR WAS BROUGHT INTO OUR DAILY LIFE!

"SUBWAY ACCIDENT" SHOWED THE VILE THINGS ATTACKING A CROWD OF PEOPLE ON THE PLATFORM OF THE BOYLSTON STREET SUBWAY

"THEN THERE WERE ANY NUMBER OF CELLAR VIEWS, WITH MONSTERS CREEPING IN THROUGH HOLES AND RIFTS IN THE MASONRY AND GRINNING AS THEY SQUATTED BEHIND BARRELS AND FURNACES AND WAITED FOR THEIR FIRST VICTIM TO DESCEND THE STAIRS.

"ONE DISGUSTING CANVAS SEEMED TO DEPICT A VAST CROSS-SECTION OF BEACON HILL, WITH ANT-LIKE ARMIES OF THE MEPHETIC MONSTERS SQUEEZING THEMSELVES THROUGH BURROWS THAT HONEYCOMBED THE GROUND.



"ANOTHER CONCEPTION MEASURABLY SHOCKED ME- A SCENE IN AN UNKNOWN VAULT WHERE GHOULS CROWDED ABOUT ONE READING A BOSTON GUIDE BOOK. THEY WERE LAUGHING HYSTERICALLY AT A CERTAIN PASSAGE THE TITLE OF THE PICTURE WAS, "HOLMES, LOWELL, AND LONGFELLOW LIE BURIED IN MOUNT AUBURN."

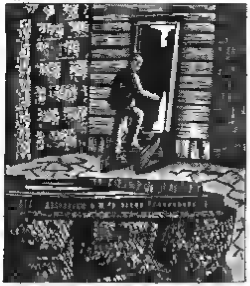
BY GOD, HOW THAT MAN,— IF HE WAS A MAN!— COULD PAINT! BUT THE WORST WAS TO COME GIVE ME THAT BOTTLE ELIOT!

"MY HOST WAS NOW LEADING THE WAY DOWN CELLAR TO HIS ACTUAL STUDIO

"AT THE BOTTOM OF THE DAMP STAIRS WAS A LARGE OPEN SPACE, AND IN THE CORNER WAS A GREAT WELL IN THE EARTHEN FLOOR. SOLID WORK OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY, OR I WAS MUCH MISTAKEN."

THIS IS AN APERTURE OF THE NETWORK OF TUNNELS THAT USED TO UNDERMINE THE HILL. THE WHOLE NORTH END ONCE HAD A SET OF TUNNELS THAT KEPT CERTAIN PEOPLE IN TOUCH WITH EACH OTHER'S HOUSES, AND THE BURYING GROUND, AND THE SEA.

"THINKING OF THINGS THIS WELL MUST HAVE BEEN CONNECTED WITH I SHIVERED, [illegible] INTO HIS STUDIO.



"A ROOM OF FAIR SIZE WITH WOODEN FLOOR AND ACETYLENE GAS LIGHTING WAS FURNISHED AS A STUDIO [illegible] WERE ALL AROUND."

I USE A CAMERA TO TAKE SCENES FOR BACKGROUNDS, SO THAT I MIGHT PAINT THEM FROM PHOTOGRAPHS IN THE STUDIO.

"THERE WAS SOMETHING VERY DISTURBING ABOUT THE NAUSEOUS SKETCHES AND HALF-FINISHED MONSTROUSITIES AROUND THE ROOM. SUDDENLY: "

LOOK UPON MY GREATEST WORK, THURBER!

AAAIIEEEEE!!

R.U. PICKMAN

"PINNED WITH A THUMB-TACK TO THE CANVAS WAS A CURLED UP PHOTOGRAPH — PROBABLY A PHOTO PICKMAN HAD PAINTED HIS BACKGROUND FROM

"SUDDENLY, PICKMAN STARTED AS IF SHOT. HE HAD BEEN LISTENING INTENTLY EVER SINCE MY SHOCKED SCREAM HAD WAKED UNACCUSTOMED ECHOES IN THE DARK CELLAR, AND HE SEEMED STRUCK WITH FRIGHT."

"HE STEPPED OUT INTO THE MAIN CELLAR AND CLOSED THE DOOR BEHIND HIM.

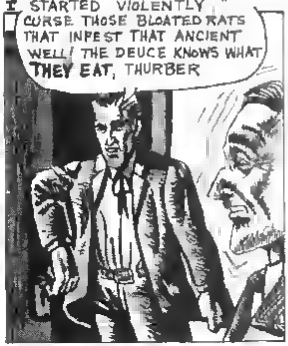
"I FANCIED I HEARD A SERIES OF SQUEALS OR BEATS SOMEWHERE — I THOUGHT OF HUGE RATS AND SHUDDERED.

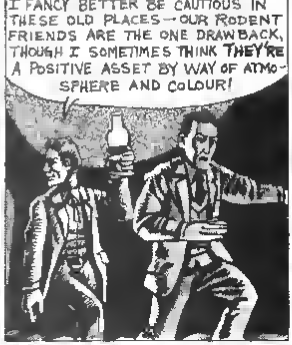
"THEN THERE WAS A FURTIVE GROPING CLATTER HEAVY WOOD FALLING ON STONE OR BRICK

"THE WOOD HAD FALLEN. THERE WAS A SHARP GRATING NOISE, A SHOUTED GIBBERISH FROM PICKMAN — AND —

"HE'D FIRED ALL SIX CHAMBERS OF THE REVOLVER AS A LION-TAMER MIGHT FIRE IN THE AIR FOR EFFECT. THERE WAS A MUFFLED SQUEAL OR SQUAWK AND A THUD.

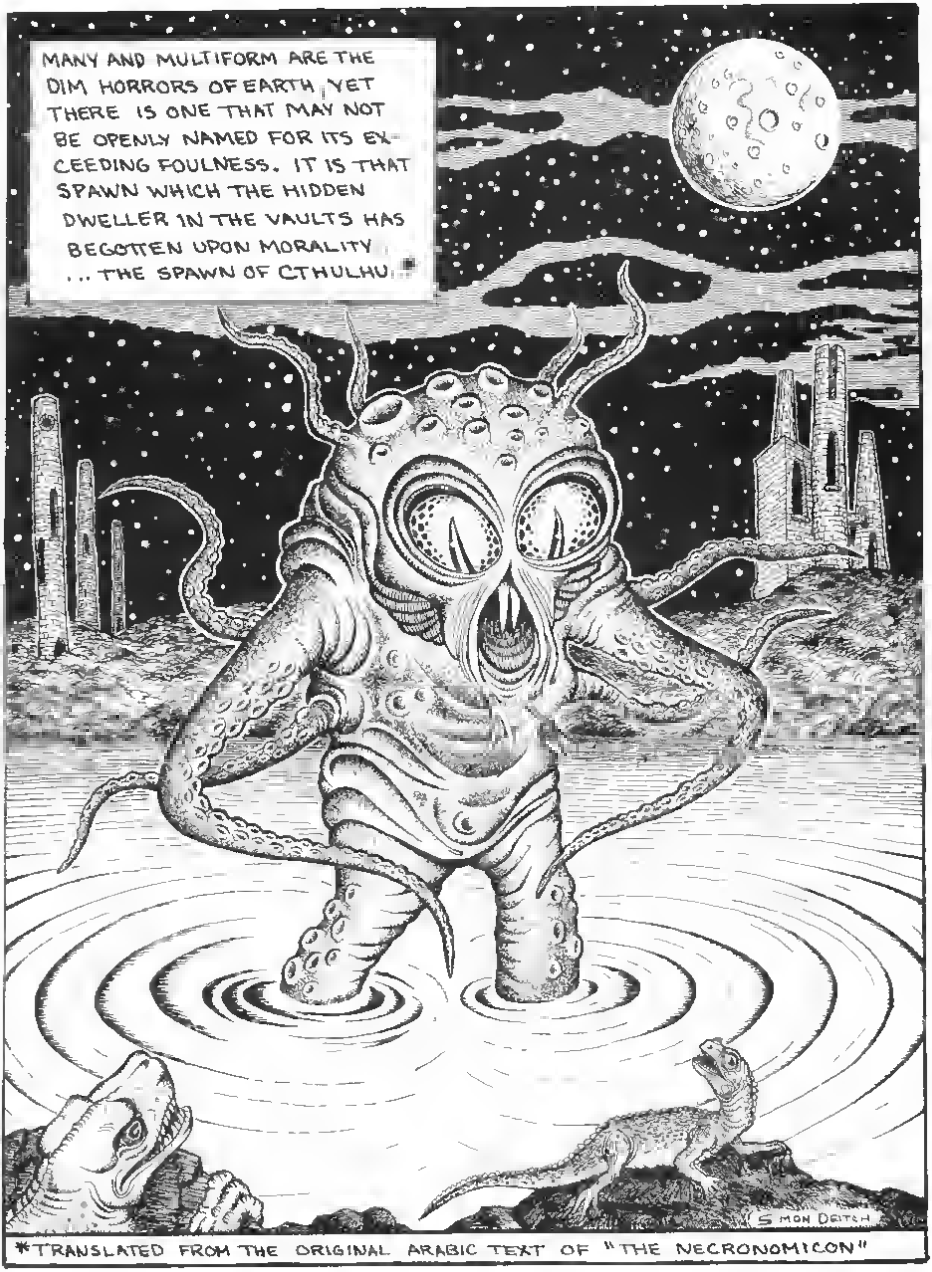
"PICKMAN OPENED THE DOOR AND I STARTED VIOLENTLY."




"WELL, ELIOT, THAT WAS THE END OF THE NIGHT'S ADVENTURE. PICKMAN HAD PROMISED TO SHOW ME THE PLACE, AND HEAVEN KNOWS HE HAD DONE IT. HE LED ME OUT OF THAT TANGLE OF ALLEYS IN ANOTHER DIRECTION.

"WE WERE SOON IN A FAMILIAR STREET. PICKMAN LEFT ME AT A CORNER, WHERE I TURNED OFF. I NEVER SPOKE TO HIM AGAIN."
WHY DID I DROP HIM?—HERE, TAKE THIS BLACK COFFEE. FIRST WE'VE HAD ENOUGH OF THE OTHER STUFF!
YOU DROPPED PICKMAN BECAUSE OF THOSE PAINTINGS, EH?
NO—IT WASN'T THE PAINTINGS, AND I GUESS YOU WON'T WONDER WHY I STEER CLEAR OF SUBWAYS AND CELLARS. YOU KNOW, THE CURLED-UP PHOTO TACKED TO THE CANVAS—I HAD VACANTLY CRUMPLED IT INTO Y POCKET HERE, LOOK!
ELIOT—OLD REID WAS RIGHT. PICKMAN WASN'T STRICTLY HUMAN! IT'S ALL THE SAME NOW, FOR HE'S GONE!
IT'S NOT A PHOTO OF A BACKGROUND, AFTER ALL. IT'S SIMPLY THE MONSTROUS BEING HE WAS PAINTING ON THAT AWFUL CANVAS. IT'S THE MODEL HE WAS USING—AND ITS BACKGROUND IS MERELY THE WALL OF THE CELLAR STUDIO IN MINUTE DETAIL. BUT BY GOD, ELIOT, IT'S A PHOTOGRAPH FROM LIFE!!
The End
ROLD-72


MANY AND MULTIFORM ARE THE DIM HORRORS OF EARTH, YET THERE IS ONE THAT MAY NOT BE OPENLY NAMED FOR ITS EXCEEDING FOULNESS. IT IS THAT SPAWN WHICH THE HIDDEN DWELLER IN THE VAULTS HAS BEGOTTEN UPON MORALITY ... THE SPAWN OF CTHULHU.*
S MON DEITCH
*TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL ARABIC TEXT OF "THE NECRONOMICON"

Sir Real's

UNDERGROUND COMIX CLASSIX

## Skull Comics #4

**Published May 1972**
**1st Edition**
**Last Gasp Eco-Funnies**
**50¢**
**36 pages**
**Printrun of 40,000 copies**
**7 1/8" x 10"**
**ISBN:**

### Stories:

2 - I Am Not Dead
3 - Skull Number Four
4 - The Hound
13 - Night Toad
14 - The Hairy Claw of Tolon
21 - Cool Air
27 - Pickman's Model
35 - The Spawn Of Cthulhu

### Artists:

Jack Jackson - 1
Simon Deitch - 2, 13, 35
Dave Sheridan - 3-12
Charles Dallas - 14-20
Michael C Smith 21-26
Herb Arnold - 27-34
Larry S Todd - 36

### Comments:

Special H.P Lovecraft issue